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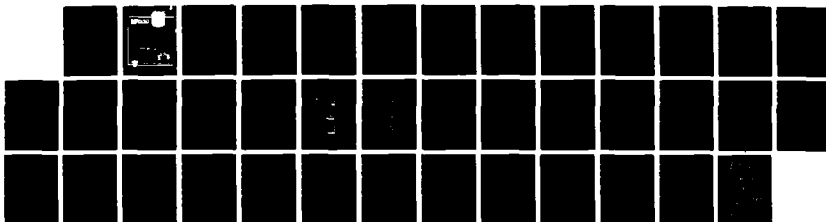
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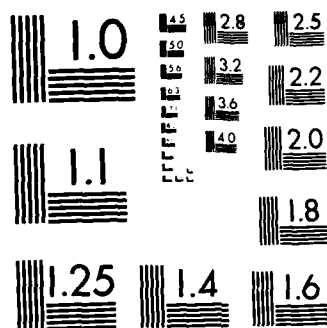
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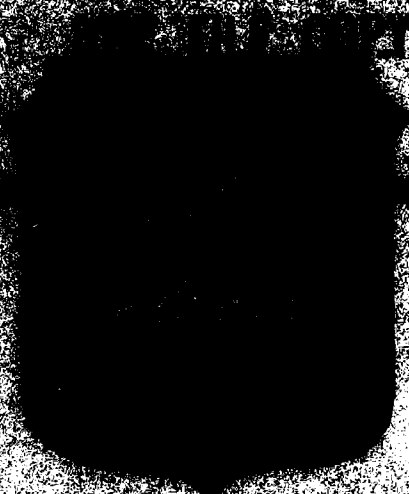




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THE ARMY FAMILY--A FORCE IN TRANSITION.  
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



THE ARMY FAMILY--A FORCE IN TRANSITION.  
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

BY

COLONEL LARRY R. BURNETTE, PA.

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From the "camp follower" days of the Revolutionary War to the Family Action Plans of the 1980's, the Army family has come a long way. The Army's growing awareness and acceptance of family members has moved its emphasis from "patchwork" services of the post WWII days to the myriad of family services and programs offered in 1988. Today's budget considerations and social evolution in America may force yet more changes in Army philosophy regarding family members and family service programming. Currently, the Army's support efforts reflect a "partnership" philosophy. Recent studies indicate that the Army may have to relook this partnership philosophy and change to one of a "utilitarian" approach. This philosophy places emphasis on the "pay off" or the means to improve retention, attrition and readiness levels.

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THE ARMY FAMILY--A FORCE IN TRANSITION.  
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Colonel Larry R. Burnette, FA

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Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
14 March 1988

## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Larry R. Burnette, COL, FA

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THE ARMY FAMILY--A FORCE IN TRANSITION  
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Army family has become a viable force of the 1980's-- a force to be reckoned with. Over a period of 213 years, the Army family has evolved from a small group of officially ignored "camp followers" to a membership which outnumbers the active duty force by over two times. The sheer size of this membership alone has demanded support activities, funding, and professional services to meet the constantly changing needs of so complex a group.

Although the Army has worked hard since the inception of the All Volunteer force to be consistent in its provision for Army families, the rapidly changing chemistry of that family and its attendant needs require a hard look at the possibilities of the development of yet a new philosophy of the Army regarding that most important retention factor . . . the U.S. Army family.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARMY FAMILY FROM 1775 TO THE 1980'S

Molly Pitcher was an Army wife. Molly Pitcher was a national heroine after she fought in the battle of Monmouth during the American Revolution. Even so, it was the state of Pennsylvania that voted to pay her a \$40 pension--not the Army--when she became older. Molly Pitcher was an Army wife. The tiny Army of the new Republic considered families a hindrance to military efficiency in 1775. In fact, the only official awareness of family members of Revolutionary War era soldiers seems to have been a concern with "Camp Followers." Regulations gave regimental or post commanders complete or arbitrary authority over all civilians.<sup>1</sup>

As the 1800's evolved, the apparent attitude was that officers "took care of their own" (families) and enlisted men weren't (supposed to be) married. Even so, in 1891, Congress did review the lives of service families on the frontier but there isn't a record of any action that might have been taken.

By the early 1900's marriage was still discouraged for soldiers as it was still seen as a possible deterrent to their efficiency. And yet, in 1917, Congress enacted an Allotment System for Families<sup>2</sup> which would indicate a growing awareness of the existing Army families and an implied responsibility to those families. This trend continued through to the 1940's.

At that time, Army regulations prevented the peacetime enlistment or re-enlistment of men with wives and minor children.<sup>3</sup> A new civilian Army was created in 1940 as a result of the Selective Service and Training Act in anticipation of America's entry into World War II. As enlistment bans were lifted, the American Army approached a new era filled with many far-reaching results. For the first time in its history, the American Army had an appreciable number of family members to deal with. It also became necessary to provide services to those family members--most of whom were separated by war from their serviceman. In order to meet the burgeoning needs of these family members, the Military Benefits Act was passed in 1942.<sup>4</sup>

By 1945, WWII had ended, but American Army families continued to grow. New global and strategic priorities seemed to be developing constantly. To meet the needs, America was having to develop and maintain a formidable peacetime Army for the first time in its history. And again there was war--the Korean conflict. Separations created more problems, many of which were identified in a 1952 study. The Wickenden Study identified a lack of basic social services as a major problem.<sup>5</sup> So, in 1954, Family and Soldier Support Programs were developed to improve retention, but they unfortunately proved ineffective and costly. The Serviceman's and Veteran's Survivor Act of 1957 was passed by Congress.<sup>6</sup> This act enabled the family to be provided for when the serviceman died.

Then it was 1960--a milestone for the Army. Family members outnumbered service members for the first time--and Viet Nam was on the horizon. In 1962, DCSPER (Deputy Chief of Staff of Personnel) developed a Family Service Program to try to meet the growing and diversified needs of the Army family. The lengthy and continued separations of the Viet Nam War coupled with the Missing in Action, Prisoner of War and Killed in Action status of thousands of soldiers created extremely serious new demands on the Army to recognize the needs of service families. In 1965, ACS (Army Community Service) was developed. And in 1967, President Johnson signed PL90-130, which removed the limits on the total number of women the services were allowed.<sup>7</sup> Twenty-five years after the lifting of one enlistment ban came the lifting of another, and the Army was entering another new era.

The 1970's brought several other dramatic changes to the Army: the end of the Viet Nam Conflict and the end of the draft, 1972 saw the enactment of a Survivor's Benefit Program, and 1973 was the year that a Supreme Court Ruling declared the spouses of female service members "dependent." 1973 was also the year that American troops withdrew from Viet Nam and the All Volunteer Force came into being. In 1975, a whole new facet of responsibility became apparent with the enactment of PL93-645, which provided for the Garnishment of Pay for Child Support or Alimony.<sup>8</sup> Quality of Life Programs were established

in 1979, to try to find and give direction to those areas of Army life which the family found stressful.

Now it is the 1980's, and since the very beginning of the decade the Army has highlighted the family, beginning with its support of the First Family Symposium held in Washington, DC in 1980. 1980 also saw the release of DOD Directive 6400-1, which initiated the Army Family Advocacy Program.<sup>9</sup> In 1981, the Family Liaison Office was established at the Pentagon, the second Family Symposium was held, there was a repeal of the ceiling placed on dependents overseas, and the Armed Forces reported that a majority (52.8%) of its EM (enlisted) were married.<sup>10</sup> In 1983, PL97-252 came into being, authorizing the treatment of retirement pay as community property in divorce proceedings.<sup>11</sup> The Army Chief of Staff's "White Paper" was released in 1983, and 1984 was "The Year of the Family." 1984 also saw the initiation of the Family Action Plan--one has been held each year since and the changes continue. (see Figure 1)

We have come a long way . . .

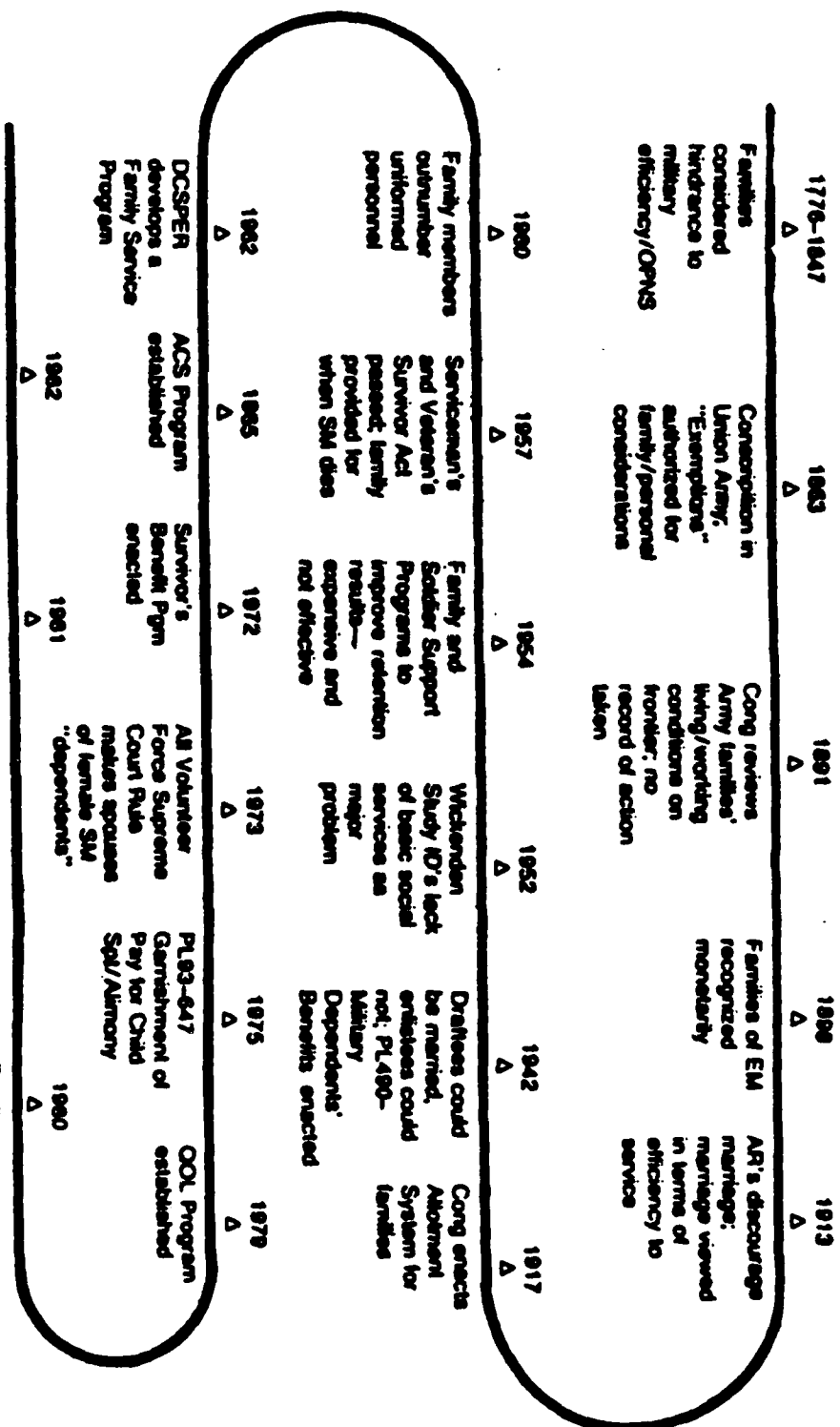


FIGURE 1.  
SOURCE: FAMILY ACTION PLAN IV

EVOLUTION OF THE ARMY'S COMMITMENT TO THE ARMY FAMILY

#### ENDNOTES

1. DA PAM 608-41, Army Family Action Plan IV, Department of the Army, 19 June 1987, p. 34.
2. Ibid., p. 35.
3. Ibid., p. 34.
4. Wickham, John A. Jr., GEN., White Paper 1983, The Army Family, U.S. Army, 14 August 1983, p. 2.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Kaslow, Florence W., and Ridenour, Richard I., The Military Family, p. 258.
8. Wickham, Op Cit.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

### CHAPTER III

#### BY THE NUMBERS: CHANGES IN SERVICE MEMBER AND FAMILY MEMBER NUMBERS IN THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS

When the All Volunteer Army was created in 1973 after the draft was ended, the military in the U.S. entered a whole new era. Since that time, the U.S. has attempted to maintain over 2 million volunteers in the military. But the new military person may be just as often married as not, may be a female, or may be a service member married to a service member. As of March 1981, 2,062,050 military members were on active duty. Over 1,090,000 were married. In September of 1980, dependents alone numbered more than 2,826,560.<sup>12</sup>

Today's Army, according to the Family Action Plan IV 1987, has 780,000 soldiers: 87% enlisted and 13% officers. The enlisted corps is young! 94% are between the ages of 21 and 25. Only 6% of the officers are that young. The majority of career soldiers are married. The total number of family members (1,082,000) increases the total population of the active Army force by one and one-half times. About half of this number (630,000) are children, one-third are spouses (384,000), and the remaining 68,000 are dependent parents, etc.<sup>13</sup> 511,600 of the dependent children are under the age of 12.<sup>14</sup>



Another dimension is added to this picture with the implementation of the "One Army" concept. The total Army force also includes the Reserve Components, DoA Civilians, and retirees. The 1983 White Paper reported the following statistics: National Guard members (418,000), Army Reservists (476,000) DA Civilians (worldwide-322,000; 36,000 + 12,000 family members-overseas), Retirees (499,000), and family members (683,000).

These numbers can be rather staggering, particularly when combined with some of the changes in lifestyle and other emerging statistics. The "traditional" American family is still a part of our society but has been joined by many variations. Army families also reflect this societal change. Today, in addition to the traditional (2 parent, 1+ children) families, there are single parent families, couples without children, marriages of convenience, and couples "living together." In addition, the spiraling divorce rate has greatly affected the American family. It is predicted that by 1990 up to 50 percent of all children in America will have experienced divorce and remarriage in their families.<sup>15</sup>

Radical changes in American society are usually reflected by the U.S. military. Huge numbers of family members also reflect a change within the military. Each has an impact--a significant impact on the mood of service members and the need for a response to their problems. The Army finds itself in a unique position in the 1980's--radically different from the 1880's. As was noted, soldiers of the 1880's were not married,

and officers "took care of their own." Today, "we recruit soldiers and retain families."<sup>16</sup> (see Figures 2, 3, and 4)

The changes continue as the Army family evolves . . .

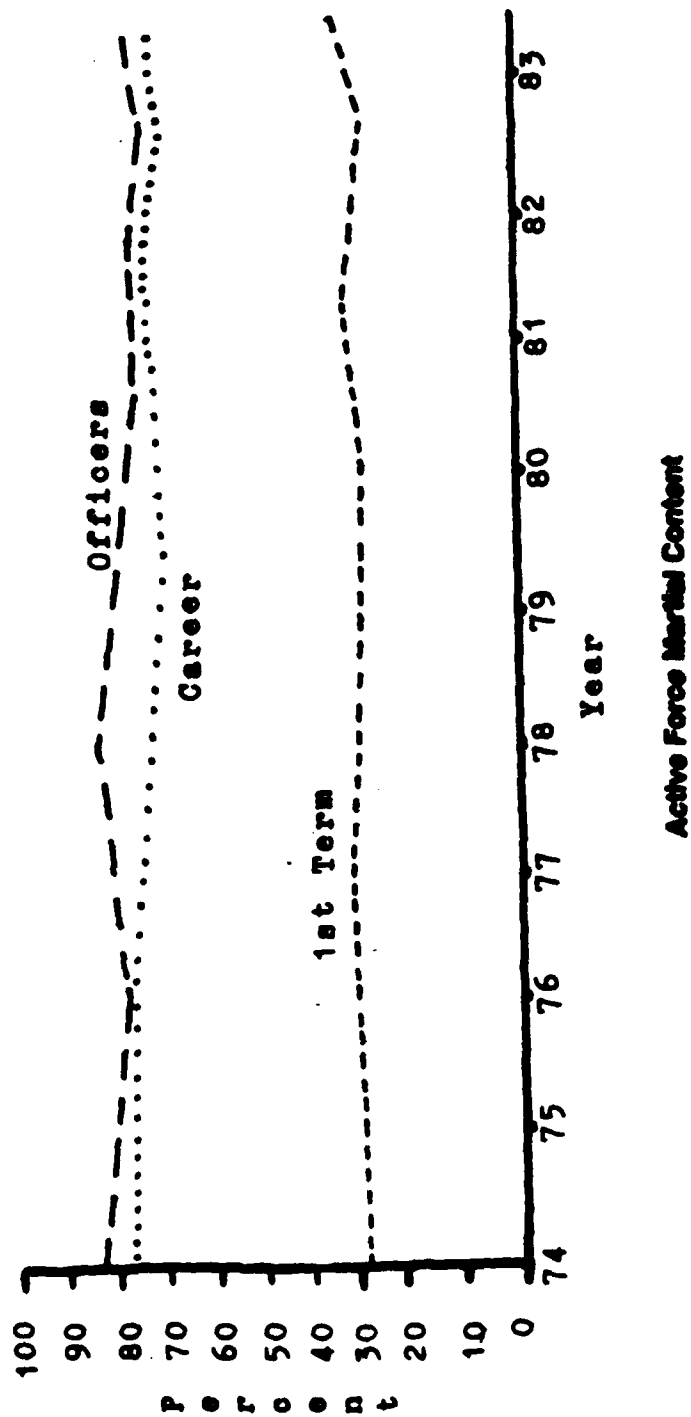


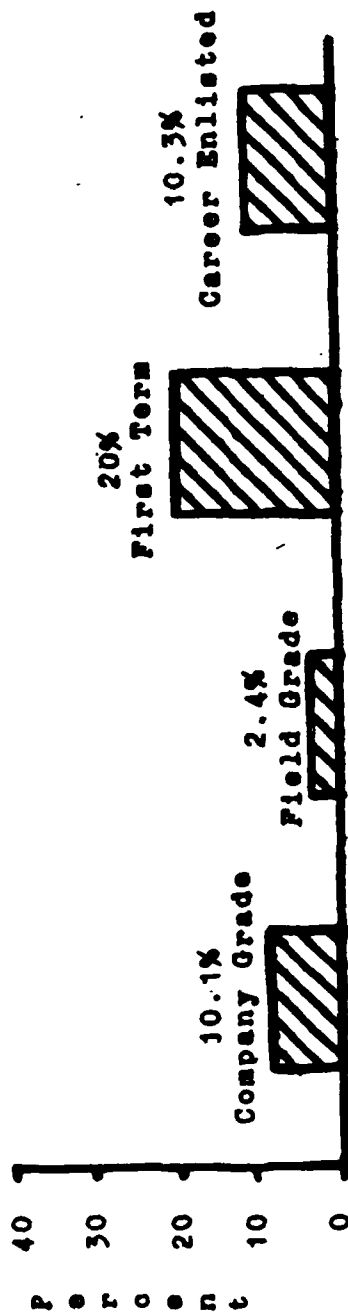
FIGURE 2.  
SOURCE: FAMILY ACTION PLAN IV



FIGURE 3.  
SOURCE: FAMILY ACTION PLAN IV

# Number of Children

Spouse in Military?	Officer		Enlisted	
	Company Grade	Field Grade	First Term	Career
No	89.9 %	97.6 %	80.1 %	89.6 %
Yes-Active	8.5 %	1.9 %	17.9 %	9.1 %
Yes-Reserve	1.5 %	0.4 %	1.4 %	0.9 %
Yes-National Guard	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.7 %	0.3 %



Percentage of Soldiers Married to Other Soldiers

FIGURE 4.  
SOURCE: FAMILY ACTION PLAN IV

#### ENDNOTES

12. Kaslow, Florence W., and Ridenour, Richard I., The Military Family, p. 255.

13. DA PAM 608-41, Army Family Action Plan IV, Department of the Army, 19 June 1987, p. 34.

14. Wickham, John A., Jr., General, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary of the Army, The Posture of the United States Army for Fiscal Year 1987, p. 59.

15. Wickham, John A., Jr., GEN, White Paper 1983, The Army Family, U.S. Army, 14 August 1983, p. 8.

16. Elton, Robert M., Lieutenant General, We Recruit Soldiers and Retain Families, 1983-84 Green Book, Army, October 1983, p. 218.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EVOLUTION OF SERVICES OFFERED TO FAMILY MEMBERS

In the White Paper of 1983 was the following statement:  
"service members and their families should be able to enjoy the benefits of the society they are pledged to defend."

The problem was that any moral obligation that the Army or society saw toward the service members was often piecemeal at best, even after the lifting of the 1942 enlistment ban. Even though the 1952 Wickenden study pointed at the lack of social services available to family members, military families were still being directed to civilian agencies (American Red Cross, Traveller's Aid, etc.) for any kind of assistance request.

Army Emergency Relief (AER) had been established in 1942 to help collect and administer funds to needy soldiers and their families, but many other types of services requirements were cropping up. When 1960 arrived and family members now outnumbered service members two to one,<sup>17</sup> the Army began to recognize the many new needs of its burgeoning family and established Family Services in 1962. But it was the establishment of Army Community Services in 1965 that signalled a true new awareness of family needs. ACS was organized to formally administer to the issues affecting the military family.<sup>18</sup> ACS has greatly diversified since its inception--its functions varying from post to post based on local needs. The services

provided may range from child care classes to the distribution of food baskets to needy families during holiday seasons, from information services to education services.

1966 was the year that saw the institution of CHAMPUS. The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services was to provide medical care through civilian facilities when care in military facilities was unavailable.<sup>19</sup>

A Quality of Life Program seminar held in 1980 pointed out the issues of (1) money, (2) education, and (3) coordination of services.<sup>20</sup> Studies that had been made of the families of POW's and MIA's during the Viet Nam Conflict indicated that some enormous issues arose because there were no family or military guidelines for handling these and other issues during any separation much less a prolonged one. Military families need to be informed of the legal and financial aspects of the family life. Research shows that egalitarian families with open communication cope better with stressful family disruptions.<sup>21</sup>

A new medical service was begun in the Washington, DC area on a trial basis in 1985. Called PRIMUS (Primary Medicine for the Uniformed Services), this is an Army-contracted/civilian-run clinic(s) which provide(s) basic medical services to military families. The aim of PRIMUS is to alleviate some of the overload at nearby military medical facilities. I was able to experience the PRIMUS clinics first hand while stationed at the Pentagon and found them convenient, efficient, and thoroughly professional. Their success has initiated plans



for the implementation of other PRIMUS clinics at major Army installations throughout CONUS.

The Delta Dental Plan, initiated in 1987, was instituted to provide a voluntary program of preventative services and basic dental care for family members of active duty service members.<sup>22</sup> (see Figure 5)

New initiatives . . .

# Evolution of the Army's commitment to The Army Family

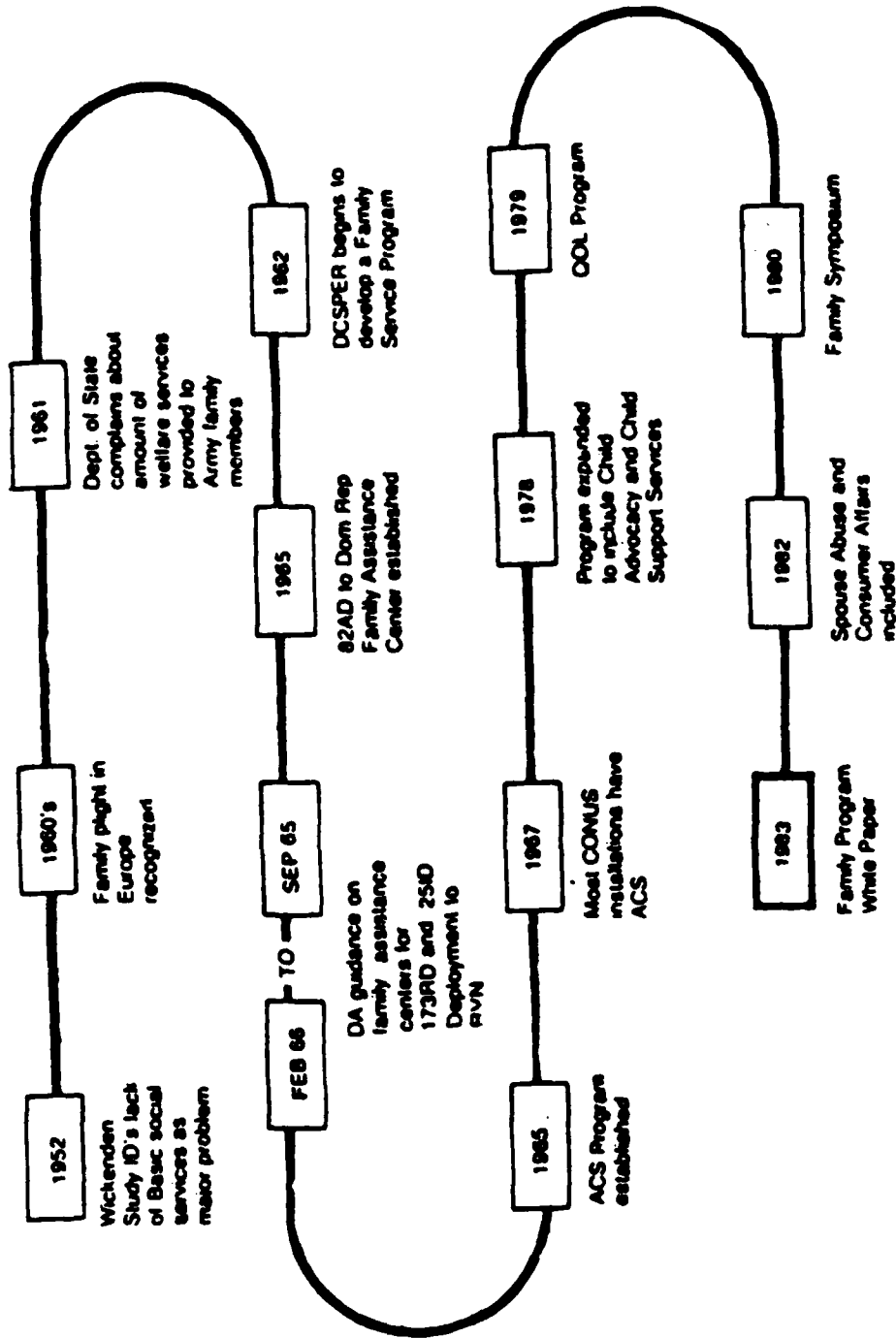


FIGURE 5.  
SOURCE: FAMILY ACTION PLAN IV

#### ENDNOTES

17. Wickham, John A., Jr., GEN, White Paper 1983, The Army Family, U.S. Army, 15 August 1983, p. 3.

18. Ibid., p. 4.

19. DA PAM 608-41, Army Family Action Plan IV, Department of the Army, 19 June 1987, p. 34.

20. Kaslow, Florence W., and Ridenour, Richard I., The Military Family, p. 173.

21. Ibid.

22. Dental Plan for Active Duty Dependents, 7 April 1987, pamphlet.

## CHAPTER V

### FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN THE '80'S

Perhaps the most dynamic changes in Army attitudes toward its family members and support of those members have taken place in the 1980's. A first step was taken by Army wives. The Army Officer's Wives Club of the Greater Washington Area (AOWGWA) organized the first Army Family Symposium in 1980.<sup>23</sup> They received financial support from the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) and moral support from the Army in this endeavor. Things were off and running.

In 1981 and 1982, the Army Family Action Council, a group of Army spouses in the Washington, DC area, sponsored a world-wide Army family symposia with the support of the Army.<sup>24</sup> Then the 1983 White Paper issued by General Wickham outlined the goals and philosophies of the Army toward the Army family: "to enhance the relationship between the Army and its families; promote wellness and develop a sense of community."

The underlying concept of the 1983 White Paper was based on the realistic idea that a better environment would attract (recruiting), inspire (readiness), and retain (retention) the best levy of talent our nation has to offer.<sup>25</sup> 1980's "Year of the Family" saw the implementation of two different but equally important programs to enhance the possibility of achieving a better environment. First, the Army Community and

Family Support Center (CFSC) was established to bring together under one roof most of the Quality of Life programs for family members.<sup>26</sup> Second, the Army Family Action Plan was also initiated. The purpose was to outline issues affecting Army families and specific actions which the Army proposes to implement for the benefit of family members.<sup>27</sup>

In 1984 and 1985 the Army targeted over one-half billion dollars to family support programs as indicated by proposals of the 1983 White Paper. Then in 1986, the Army initiated an ambitious five year program of research on Army families involving the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and outside contractors.<sup>28</sup>

The fourth Family Action Plan was initiated in June 1987. The final report of FAP IV, published in October 1987, reported that there were 77 issues: 10 soldier-specific, 46 family-oriented, 11 Reserve component, 8 retirees (a new target group), and two civilian. By the time of the fourth Family Action Plan process had become institutionalized and the Plan is now being used as a comprehensive management tool by the Army.<sup>29</sup>

In March 1988, we at Carlisle Barracks will hold our third annual Family Symposium. Current issues and problems will be discussed and updates will be given on the results of last year's symposium. The issues which are Army-wide will be

sent forth to TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command) for study at this year's FAP.

Action is being taken . . .

#### ENDNOTES

23. Vernez, Georges, and Zellman, Gail L., A Rand Note: Families and Mission. A Review of the Effects of Family Factors on Army Attrition, Retention, and Readiness. August 1987, p. 5.

24. Ibid.

25. Op Cit, DA PAM 608-41, p. 3.

26. Op Cit, Vernez, Georges, p. 5.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 8.

29. Caliber Associates, Assessment of Army Family Action Plans. Final Report, Executive Summary, November 16, 1987, p. 1.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME PROBLEMS NEVER CHANGE

The highly motivated actions and reactions of the 1980's Army to the problems created by the challenge of Army life for service and family members has been an important display of support. Even so, there seem to be some recurring problems that are indigenous to the military lifestyle:

- (1) frequent/long separations
- (2) numerous moves/housing problems
- (3) locations with unfamiliar cultures
- (4) limited opportunities for spouse employment
- (5) customs/authority structure of the military
- (6) educational opportunities different/limited<sup>30</sup>

The problems appear to magnify as the Army "Family" continues to grow and change. As noted earlier, the impact on recruiting, readiness and retention is noticeable if a soldier or family member feels real stress related to any of those areas. Families have a mode of decision making regarding their environment and its effects. (see Figure 6.)

The make-up of the family has a bearing on its decision making process and today's Army family has changed. In addition to the traditional mom-pop-kid(s) family, today's Army family may have one of several other compositions such as single parent-kid(s), mom-pop-kids-dependent parent(s), etc., etc.

The Army has become aware of all those compositions and their attendant needs and has made great strides in providing the correct services.

ACS was revised in both 1978 and 1983 to try to meet some/all of those new requirements. Presently, there are 162 ACS centers throughout the Army which are working toward that end. In a life-long tradition of self-help, ACS relies heavily on volunteer service to help it meet three key areas of support:

- (1) Direct help or intervention--short-term counseling/assistance during crisis
- (2) Proactive efforts such as workshops/classes on topics of interest-concern
- (3) Routine maintenance-support such as extensive information/referral services.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, the Army has over 60+ programs geared toward the assisting/improving of the quality of life of service and family members. Some of the programs initiated for family support are:

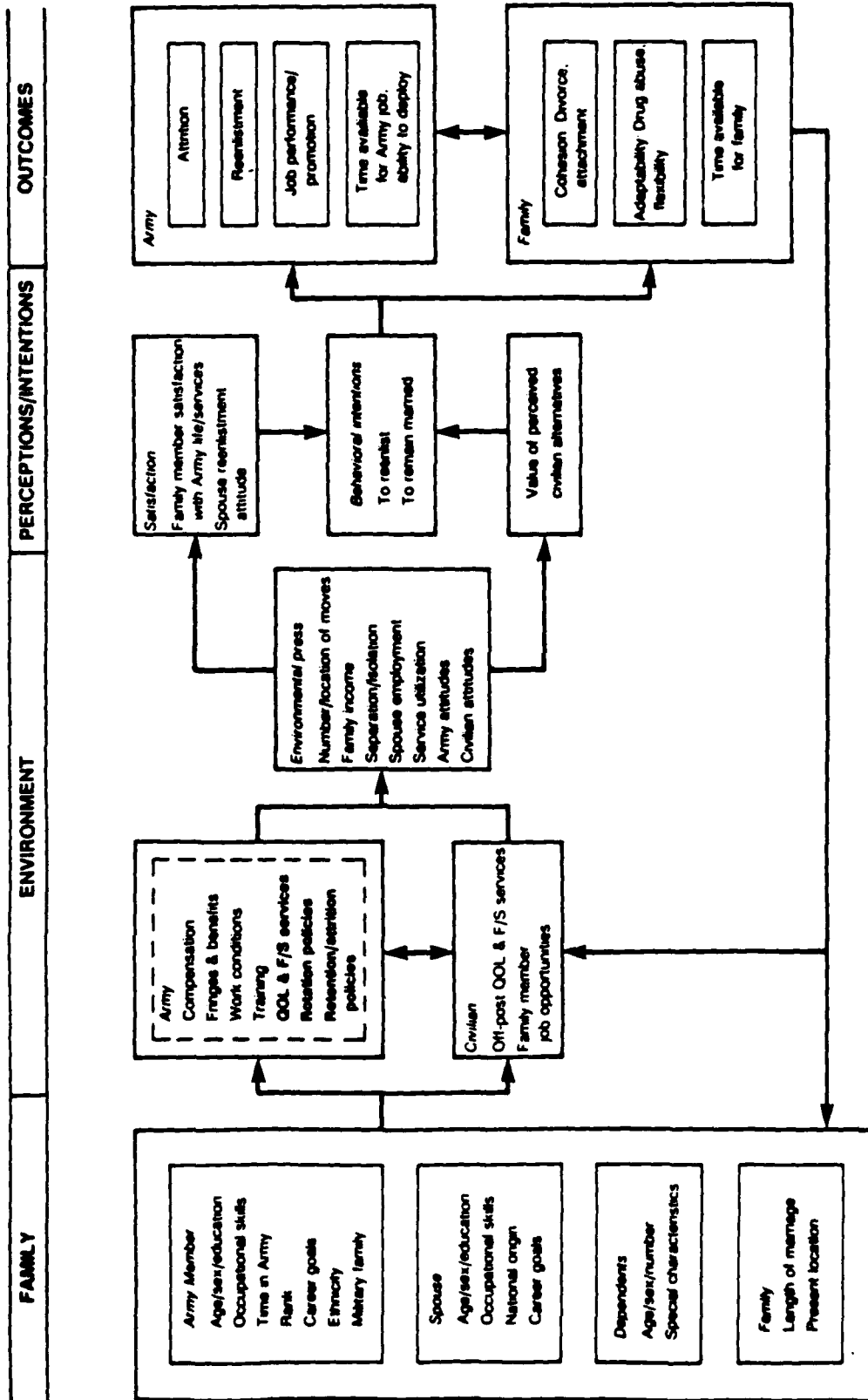
- (1) recreational activities
- (2) child care
- (3) family advocacy
- (4) spouse employment assistance
- (5) drug and alcohol programs<sup>32</sup>

All of the Quality of Life programs are divided into two categories:



- (1) General - includes those benefits and services that are designed to be available to and used by all members of specified groups.
- (2) Targeted - those benefits designed to be used by people with special needs and problems.<sup>33</sup>

The work continues . . .



A model of Army family decisionmaking

FIGURE 6.  
SOURCE: RAND REPORT

#### ENDNOTES

30. Op Cit., Vernez, Georges, p. 63.
31. Op Cit., Laslow, Florence, p. 263.
32. Op Cit., p. 7.
33. Op Cit., p. 37.

## CHAPTER VII

### PARTNERSHIP VS UTILITARIAN APPROACH TO THE ARMY AND FAMILY MEMBERS

In the White Paper of 1983, General Wickham stated the philosophy of the Army:

A partnership exists between the Army and Army families. The Army's unique missions, concept of service and lifestyle of its members . . . all affect the nature of this partnership. Towards the goal of building a strong partnership, the Army remains committed to assuring adequate support to families in order to promote wellness; to develop a sense of community; and to strengthen the mutually reinforcing bonds between the Army and its families.

In 1987, a research commissioned by the Army was published by the Rand Corporation. The research discusses two approaches used by the Army to provide family services and indicates possible dichotomies of the two: partnership and utilitarian.

The first, partnership approach, is rooted in the notion that the relationship between the Army and its members' families is reciprocal. In this view, the military member pledges strong commitment and a willingness to give his or her life, if necessary, to meet the Army's mission; in exchange, the Army assumes an obligation toward members and their families to provide those benefits and services that insure them a reasonable quality of life.

The second, utilitarian approach, views family members and family support programs as a potential policy lever for maintaining force levels and increasing force quality and readiness. Underlying this view is the notion that family members play a significant role in decisions concerning enlistment, attrition, and retention; if their needs are not being met, military members are likely to be pressured to leave the service or to devote duty time to meeting those needs. In this view, provision of support services to family members satisfies them by meeting their

needs which, in turn, increases their positive influence on the military member to remain in the service and increases the members' commitment and performance.

The Rand study indicates a belief that these two approaches are in conflict. It points out that the partnership approach requires services to be provided to family members regardless of their impact on morale. On the other hand, morale and readiness are the interest of the utilitarian approach and this interest indicates a concentration of monies on the services which have the greatest effect on both.

The study further noted that the "potential incompatibility" of the utilitarian and partnership approaches hasn't really been identified until lately. But it appears that the utilitarian approach is being relied upon more heavily today by DoD, Congress and the budget agencies. The Army seems to be moving in this direction as well.

Is this the direction of the future?

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Army family of the 1980's is truly in a period of great transition. Accordingly, the Family Support programs offered by the Army must be adaptable to the unique needs of the Army family. In a continuing effort to identify and meet those needs, the Army of the 1980's has relied on several avenues of resource (i.e., research, Family Action Plans). Statistics indicate that today's Army family attitude also has a serious impact on attrition, retention and readiness. Because of these two major factors, family needs and family attitude, the Army developed a philosophy based on a "partnership" relationship with Army families. It appears that this concept may not be as valid as the Army and its family members move into the 1990's. In fact, DoD, Congress and the Army itself appear to be leaning more often to the utilitarian approach in which family members and support programs may be seen/used as levers which will affect the quality and readiness of the force.

With numbers over two times the size of the active duty force, it is obvious that the Army family is a valid Army component to be reckoned with. The budget cut of today and likely budget cuts of tomorrow coupled with the needs and attitudes of Army families will require innovative, yet logical, thinking, planning and action on the part of the Army to meet

the needs; work within the budget; yet maintain positive attitudes within its families. Failure by the Army to achieve this delicate but necessary balance will most likely result in low morale and high attrition rates.

Therefore, it seems that the Army of tomorrow would best succeed in a utilitarian approach in meeting family needs, constantly assessing the needs, prioritizing all needs, finding out which needs affect the most families, and reacting accordingly. If the Army follows this utilitarian approach, it will surely have the desired positive effect on the morale of service members and their families, as well as enabling the Army to make decisions in a logical, informed manner.

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